

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 4, 9, 16 and 17 are amended, and claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 11 and 14 are canceled, without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. Claims 7-8 were previously canceled. Accordingly, claims 2, 4, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15-17 are pending this application. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that the Office Action indicates that claims 2, 10, 12, 13 and 15 are allowed.

Claim 9 is amended to depend from allowed claim 2, and thus also is allowable.

II. Claim Objections

The Office Action objects to claims 4, 5, 6, 16 and 17 due to informalities. The objection to claim 6 is moot in view of its cancellation. Claims 4, 5, 16 and 17 are amended solely to correct informalities. Thus, the claims are not narrowed by such amendments. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,639,250 to Shimoda et al. The rejection is moot with respect to canceled claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 11 and 14.

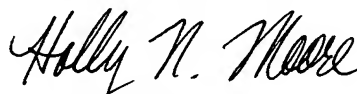
Further, as discussed above, claim 9 is amended to depend from allowed claim 2. Therefore, claim 9 is patentable over Shimoda et al. and also allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2, 4, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 15-17 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Holly N. Moore
Registration No. 50,212

JAO:HNm/ale

Date: April 13, 2005

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461
--